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EDUCATIONAL NEWS AND EDITORIAL COMMENT

On Wednesday evening, February 25, alumni and students of the University of Chicago in attendance at the meeting of the Department of Superintendence in Richmond, Virginia, will meet for the annual Chicago banquet. The place and exact time of the meeting will be announced by placards posted at headquarters.

MRS. YOUNG RE-ELECTED

Peace, or at least a lull in the battle, has come again to the troubled school system of Chicago. A reconstructed Board of Education has re-elected Mrs. Young. To accomplish this result Mayor Harrison filled with supporters of Mrs. Young the places of four members who voted against her in the meeting of December 10. A fifth man, whose resignation the mayor also "accepted," having "seen the light" and having reversed his former vote, is allowed to retain his seat. The board, thus reconstructed, reinstated Mrs. Young. Mr. Shoop, as gracefully as possible, has again taken the position of assistant superintendent.

In the meantime the courts will be called upon to settle the rights of the ousted members of the board. Their attorney has presented to the state's attorney a petition for quo warranto proceedings against the new trustees. The state's attorney, whose consent to the proceedings is necessary, has announced in the public press that he will file the petition. The issue raised in the petition is the validity of "resignations" exacted, or received, by the mayor from prospective board members prior to their actual appointment. The dismissed members insist that such resignations make of the board mere "rubber-stamp" members. Moreover they assert that such resignations are void, because one cannot legally resign an office until he has actually been appointed. There seems to be both sense and equity in this contention. It would seem that all matters of great moment are to be passed on in the mayor's office, while board members are to be allowed to do routine duties so long as they do not oppose the wishes of the chief magistrate. If, however, the courts sustain the mayor, he seems to have found a new and effective method of "recalling" recalcitrant appointees. Indeed, until this matter is finally settled the action of the Auditorium meeting,

calling on Governor Dunne for a law to secure an elective school board with recall provisions attached, seems premature and unnecessary.

The *School Review* again insists that the public is, or ought to be, more interested in this and in the other educational questions involved in all this unseemly squabble, than it is in the personalities of either board members or of school officials. On one important matter supported by Mrs. Young, even the reconstructed board has expressed itself very emphatically. By the decisive vote, 13 to 7, the board has refused to allow "sex hygiene" (at least in the present form), to be taught in the schools. Another proposal of the superintendent, that all night study by high-school pupils be abolished, will come up for consideration in the near future.

TEACHERS' PENSIONS IN NEW YORK CITY

The Board of Retirement of the New York schools has recently submitted to the Board of Education a revised plan of teachers' pensions containing several important changes. The proposed law differs from the present one in several essentials; it levies larger contributions upon the teachers; it grades the pensions differently; and it provides a later retiring age. Among the more important provisions of the new plan may be cited these general principles.

1. Upon recommendation, any member of the teaching staff may retire on account of "medical unfitness," provided that such member is certified to be unfit and has served not less than twenty years.

2. Under the old law any teacher may retire after thirty years of service. The changes contemplate that the applicant must have reached the age of fifty-five if a woman, and of sixty if a man, and must have been in the service not less than twenty years, instead of fifteen as under the present law.

3. Under the old law all teachers contribute 1 per cent of their salaries. It is now proposed that 2 per cent shall be contributed by all those who have served less than ten years; 3 per cent by those who have served more than ten years and less than twenty years and whose salaries are above \$3,000 and below \$5,000; 4 per cent by those who have served more than twenty years and whose salaries are \$5,000 or more. In no case shall the total contribution in one year be more than \$240.

4. The minimum pension of \$600 has been retained; the amount can never be more than half-pay; and the upward limit is raised to \$3,000. The bill fixes the annuity at a sum equivalent to $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent of the salary for each year of service at the date of retirement.

It is quite natural that the increased burden of the annual contributions has brought a storm of protest from the rank and file of the teachers. Many have asserted that the increases will be a decided injustice, and even a severe hardship to a few. Not a few voices are heard saying that the whole scheme of pensions should be abandoned.

In a late meeting of the City Teachers' Association the following resolutions were passed, representing considerable unanimity of opinion.

1. That the assessment on teachers be limited to 1 per cent on all salaries.
2. An increase of the excise contribution from 5 to 7 per cent.
3. Any annual deficit of the fund to be taken care of by the city and the state.
4. That no change be made in the length of service required to participate in the pension fund.
5. Provided that changes as proposed are adopted and the teachers are taxed not more than 1 per cent, a pension of one-half salary to be formed, with a minimum pension of \$900 and a maximum pension of \$2,000. If teachers are to be taxed more than 1 per cent, then the above limits are opposed.

After a lengthy discussion a motion that the disability clause containing the twenty-year limit be reduced to ten years was laid on the table, as there was a wide divergence of opinion. However, it is to be hoped that the teachers of New York, through their new Teachers' Council, will not succeed in defeating the bill.

Certainly \$20 insurance premium out of a salary of \$1,000, with a maximum of \$240 for the largest salaries, does not seem too heavy a burden. Moreover, the provisions that make the burden fall most heavily upon newcomers and upon the well-paid men and women who are near the retiring limit, seem to be equitable. The New York teachers should realize that they are in the vanguard of a movement the burden of which will ultimately be borne more and more by the state. The United States will some day pension teachers, as Germany does, the entire expense being borne by the state. The provision that makes it possible for a teacher to retire because of physical unfitness, if the unique insurance term "medical unfitness" may be so construed, is highly to be commended. The greatest fear of salaried people who have others dependent upon them is the fear of incapacity. In such misfortune they not only may be unable to help their former dependents, but may even be a burden upon them. In this connection it is to be noted that the payments made from the retirement funds for sick leave, a maximum of ninety-five days' pay in one year, have been in the past the chief cause of depleting the resources of the Board of Retirement.

Young teachers to whom the day of retiring seems very remote should realize that they are securing cheap sickness insurance that guards them each passing year.

AGE OF RETIREMENT

The provision for an automatic retirement after a term of thirty years is in line with all good retirement plans in specifying a minimum age at which advantage may be taken of the pension. The age of retirement is most important from the point of view of the actuary. The expert employed in New York asserts that a retirement after thirty years would cost the teachers of New York $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent of their annual salaries to maintain the fund on a sound basis; whereas the later retirement secured by the age limits of fifty-five and sixty years will reduce the cost to a little over 3 per cent. Just why there should be a distinction of five years in favor of the women, after the long fight for equality of sexes in New York, is an interesting, if unimportant, question.

There is one feature of the proposed law which appears questionable. Assume that the purpose of any pension system is not the reward of merit, but an actual protection against want in old age, or against distress in case of incapacity—to quote Dr. Lies, “one phase of the movement to dispose of the superannuated and disabled individual and to rob old age of its economic terrors.” If this is a fair assumption, the annuity of a kindergartner ought to be somewhere near the annuity of a ward principal. The only reason why one should receive \$600, while the other receives for the same misfortune two or three times \$600, is that the latter has paid two or three times as large premiums. The needs of the two women in misfortune may be assumed to be about equal. To be sure, the proposed law does throw a heavier burden upon the well-paid teachers; but it seems questionable whether their premium burden is really in proportion to the benefits which they may anticipate. It is this feeling of inequality that seems to irritate many of the New York teachers. The federal government pensions Grand Army officers more than privates; but the federal pension system is open to the objection that it is too much a reward of merit. Moreover, the privates in the army of New York teachers are the ones who are most likely to wear out in the service. The officers of a city-school system are relieved of some of the wear and tear of daily routine.

CLASS SPONSORS

For many years in the high schools of Fairmont, West Virginia, the custom has prevailed of naming each class for some prominent citizen of the city. Recently this custom has been used to bring the school

in closer touch with the people of the community. The man for whom the class is named is called the class "sponsor," and he assumes some of the responsibility which that term implies. Each class chooses its "sponsor" at the beginning of its second year in high school and after that time the class is known by his name, rather than by the numeral of the year in which it is to graduate. The citizen whose name the class bears feels personal interest in the class collectively, and as far as possible individually. He entertains them usually in his own home once or twice during their Junior and Senior years; he assists them in different ways in their various class enterprises.

The sponsor of the present Senior class takes great interest in the individual members. At the beginning of their Junior year he went to the school building and secured a list of their names. He also inquired about all those who had dropped out of the class; he succeeded in getting several to return to school. He has attended all class functions and has given talks on various subjects.

A member of the Board of Education says that he gained a better knowledge of the spirit and purpose of the school through this association with high-school students than he acquired in his official position as a member of the board. The sponsor of another class kept the class together after graduation by organizing its members into a local historical association. This organization has done some commendable work in arousing an interest in the preservation of things in the community that are of historical value. Other class sponsors have assisted their classes in presenting gifts to the school, or in some instances they have rendered material assistance to the high-school authorities in upholding proper conduct among the students.

OPEN-AIR SCHOOLS

Director Leonard Ayres of the division of education of the Sage Foundation has published a bulletin on open-air schools from which the public learns that since Providence, Rhode Island, started the first open-air schools in 1908, the number of cities having them has increased as follows: 1908, three cities; 1909, seven cities; 1910, fifteen cities; 1911, thirty-two cities; 1912, sixty cities.

Roughly speaking, the number of cities having open-air schools has doubled each year. At the recent International Congress on School Hygiene no subject was more eagerly discussed. At present the most interesting phases of the movement are the successful attempts of educators and architects to make the beneficial results of open-air schooling available for normal children in ordinary schools. The booklet presents the more important facts and factors of this movement.

Of the history of the movement the bulletin says:

The first open-air school was started in Charlottenburg, a suburb of Berlin, in 1904. More than a hundred anaemic, ailing children, behind in their classes, were taken from the schoolrooms and taught in a pine forest. Three months later nearly all of these children returned to their schools, rosy, sturdy, free from disease, and further advanced in their lessons than their normal schoolmates. Today the out-of-door school is an integral part of the German educational system.

In America credit for being the first to put the idea into practice must be divided between New York City and Providence, Rhode Island. In 1904 New York City lent one of its teachers and supplied equipment for a class in the Sea Breeze Hospital for Tuberculous Children. In 1908 Providence started the first open-air school as the term is now understood. Since that time over sixty American cities have established open-air schools. No single case of failure has been recorded. No city that has once undertaken the work has abandoned it.

The natural query is, Why need a child be anaemic to secure abundant fresh air and warm sunshine at school?

UNION OPPOSITION TO TRADE SCHOOLS

From Saginaw, Michigan, come the rumblings of opposition to certain aspects of trade schools that may perhaps become widespread and bitter. The Pattern-Makers' Union presented two resolutions to the Federation of Labor in Saginaw, directed against the policy of the Arthur Hill Trade School. The first resolution set forth that finished patterns had been furnished the Werner-Pfleiderer Company by the management of the school. It was pointed out that such a policy is detrimental to the men employed in this line of work. Such a policy was likened to the prison contract system, as it permits concerns to get finished work at the price of raw material. The second resolution demanded that the present instructor in pattern-making be dismissed, and that a local man, a member of the union, be appointed in his stead. Both of these resolutions were adopted by the Federation and copies were sent to the school board.

The first of these resolutions might readily be expected from organized labor, which looks jealously at any attempt to take work from its members, which in extreme cases will not allow a man to teach his trade to his own son, which in the past has often been opposed to machinery on the ground that it robs men of the right to work. The second resolution, insisting that a union man be employed as instructor, is indeed consistent with the principle of the "closed shop." The logic

as applied to the teaching profession is exceedingly dangerous. Carried to its conclusion the thinking of these labor men suggests that all teachers ought to be unionized. Indeed, pushed to the extreme, such logic indicates that any worker, who produces a salable product not strictly in the line of his life work, ought to be enjoined from selling it, because forsooth if he does sell, he will be infringing on the right of someone to earn a living.

CONFERENCE OF EVENING SCHOOLS IN PHILADELPHIA

The tendency for various institutions giving evening work to come together for co-operative effort as in Des Moines and other cities has been carried far in Philadelphia. Under the leadership of the Public Education Association representatives from the various agencies carrying on evening classes met in conference. There were represented the Y.M.C.A., Drexel Institute, Franklin Institute, School of Industrial Art, Spring Garden Institute, Wagner Institute, Temple University, Trades School, and the Evening Public Schools of Philadelphia. This meeting eventuated in a Conference of Evening Schools which organized as a section of the Public Education Association, to be known as the "Industrial and Technical Education Conference of the Public Education Association." Its membership consists of educators and employers. The Conference is to act as a clearing-house, to systematize and utilize to the fullest extent all the industrial and technical opportunities offered throughout the city in evening schools.

Following are some of the results already accomplished: All the schools, whether semi-private or public in character, have been brought together. Joint advertisements through posters and through the press have been issued. Some employers have offered to pay a portion of the cost of tuition for any of their employees. Some establishments are organizing night classes in their own shops. A meeting was held of all municipal employees in Philadelphia. The object was to bring to the attention of the men employed in the various departments of the city the means by which they may equip themselves for positions of greater efficiency and higher responsibility.

PART-TIME CO-OPERATIVE SCHOOL IN FITCHBURG, MASSACHUSETTS

Evening schools, however, can at best serve only an exceptional minority who have a surplus of zeal, health, and vigor. For the large mass of young people who have to enter early into the world of wages, the schools ought to provide some means of combining wage-earning

and schooling. In Massachusetts the part-time system, flexible enough to meet widely varying conditions, is being largely extended.

This movement to unite the school and the shop is perhaps best illustrated in the part-time co-operative schools of Fitchburg, Mass. During the last year the boys in these part-time schools of Fitchburg earned about \$8,000. The earning of such a sum is, however, relatively minor in importance. Of far greater import is the fact that the co-operative school is succeeding in preparing highly efficient workmen. It is making skilled mechanics out of boys who might otherwise become unskilled laborers.

Fitchburg, under the leadership of W. B. Hunter, Director of the Industrial Department of the High School, began the part-time plan in 1908. Ten firms of manufacturers entered into an agreement with the school authorities by which boys desiring to learn a trade can remain in school half-time and work as apprentices in shops the other half. The course is of four years' duration, the first being wholly spent in school and the next three years alternating weekly between shop and school. The manufacturers take the boys in pairs, so that by alternating they have one of the pair always at work and likewise the school is provided with one of the pair. Shopwork consists of instruction in all the operations necessary to the particular trade. The first year is spent entirely in school. The boys receive for the first year 10 cents an hour; for the second, 11 cents; for the third, $12\frac{1}{2}$ cents; making \$165 for the first year; \$181.50 for the second; \$206.25 for the third; a total of \$552.75 for the three years.

The school year, 20 weeks, is given over to English, arithmetic, shop mathematics, algebra, geometry, mechanism of machines, freehand and mechanical drawing, chemistry, physics. One course in civics creeps in beside English as a cultural study. This course was insisted upon by the manufacturers that "the boys might become better mechanics, capable of advancing into the brightest possibilities in the trade."

The Fitchburg plan begun in 1908, like the somewhat similar plan begun in 1909 in Beverly, Mass., is of course based upon the experiments begun in 1906 by Dean Herman Schneider of the department of Engineering of the University of Cincinnati. Professor Frank Mitchell Leavitt in his recent book, *Examples of Industrial Education*, predicts that the part-time idea, capable of being adapted in such a large variety of ways, will ultimately be adopted by many schools. "One might almost say that wherever two boys could be 'paired' and one employer could be found who would take them alternately, any school . . . could inaugurate a system of part-time co-operative education."